

**Minutes of the Regular Planning Board Meeting
Monday, January 14, 2008**

1. CONVENE: 7:03 p.m.
2. FLAG SALUTE: Board Member Ezzy Ashcraft.
3. ROLL CALL: President Cook, Vice President Kohlstrand, Board Members Ezzy Ashcraft, Lynch and McNamara.

Board Member Cunningham was absent from roll call.

Also present were Planning Services Manager Andrew Thomas, Assistant City Attorney Farimah Faiz.

4. MINUTES:
 - a. Meeting of November 13, 2007 (Not available)
 - b. Meeting of November 26, 2007.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft noted that on page 3, under the description of 9-A, the spelling of ProLogis was misspelled as ProLogic.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft noted that page 6, paragraph 2, should be changed to read, "He noted that the goal of the plan was to *make finding a parking* easier for the shopper."

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft noted that the second to last paragraph on page 6 should be changed to read, "He did not believe the users of the handicapped stalls *would be being* able to get out easily with the traffic flows."

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft noted that page 7, paragraph 1, read, "The Master Plan now states that for a particular use, the maximum should be 4.5, but shared parking for multiple uses, the maximum shall be 4.5 per 1000." She did not believe this sentence was explanatory, and requested that some clarification be added.

Member McNamara noted that on page 10, the approval date for the minutes were listed as December 10, 2007, and should be January 14, 2008.

President Cook noted that the summary paragraph after Mr. Berry spoke read, "Mr. Steve Kendrick displayed the changes and noted that they retained the concept of the continuous island along the east-west drive aisle, but to provide head-in parking, moving the drive aisle back to keep the circulation within the parking pod." She had difficulty picturing what had been approved, and requested that a smaller version of that section be attached so the Board could visualize it before the final approval was made.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft agreed, and noted that the approval was based on what was projected on the overhead screen. She inquired whether the visual could be included.

Mr. Thomas noted that the new drawing was created the next day and attached to the final resolution.

The minutes of November 26, 2007, will be considered at the meeting of January 28, 2008.

c. Meeting of December 10, 2007 (Not available)

5. AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSION: None.

6. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS:

a. Future Agendas

Mr. Thomas noted that staff had received a letter of resignation from Board member Mariani, effective immediately.

Mr. Thomas provided an update on future agenda items.

b. Zoning Administrator Report

Mr. Thomas provided the Zoning Administrator report.

c. Miscellaneous

Vice President Kohlstrand noted there had been some discussion at the Fernside homeowners association meeting recently, and inquired about the Council's stance and possible action on the Harbor Bay Isle GPA/EIR. Mr. Thomas replied that the Council had not taken any action at all on the proposal for the rezoning and the General Plan Amendment. They did settle a legal dispute about a technical issue regarding the existing development agreement. He added that the City had been challenged by one of the opponents on the validity of the legal settlement.

Vice President Kohlstrand inquired when the theater would open.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft noted that the committee was waiting for a date certain, but anticipated it would be in February or March.

7. ORAL COMMUNICATION: None.

8. CONSENT CALENDAR:

None.

9. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS:

- 9-A. City of Alameda General Plan Retail Policy Amendments – Applicant – City of Alameda..** The Planning Board will consider a General Plan Amendment to amend Section 2.5 Retail Business and Services, to add and modify policies as recommended by the Alameda Citywide Retail Policy Report. The proposed amendments would affect all properties in non-residential zoning districts and mixed use zoning districts.

Mr. Thomas presented the staff report.

President Cook noted that page 1 identified community centers as being planned for Alameda Landing, Alameda Point and the Del Monte Building in the Northern Waterfront area. She inquired who planned the Del Monte Building, and noted that it connoted approval of a concept that the Planning Board had not yet seen. Mr. Thomas replied that was a valid concern.

Vice President Kohlstrand inquired whether the City wanted any more community shopping centers such as South Shore and Marina Village. She believed that while the uses were desired, the configuration would be more appropriate as a main street type of development. She did not believe that shopping centers full of private streets and big blocks were very friendly to pedestrians, and that the City should move away from them as much as possible.

Board Member Lynch noted that the last sentence in the third paragraph, “Types of Retail Districts: Main Street Business Districts,” read: “These districts are pedestrian-oriented districts with historical patterns of development that limit building form, and the ability of individual businesses to provide on-site parking.” He did not understand the last section about parking, and while that may be the City’s desire, he inquired which businesses contained within the Main Street business district provided on-street parking. Mr. Thomas noted that it should read, “...and *limit* the ability of individual businesses to provide on-street parking.”

Vice President Kohlstrand noted that outlets such as Pottery Barn could be offered in an urban setting, rather than the traditional suburban setting.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft noted that there was a potential for retail at the three areas that were mentioned, and suggested adding a paragraph at the end of the section stating that “additional retail districts may be located at Alameda Landing and Alameda Point.”

President Cook believed that terminology was important, and that a community shopping center connoted a suburban shopping malls that are normally reached by car.

Vice President Kohlstrand noted that it was important to keep the guiding nature of the General Plan Amendment in mind throughout the process.

President Cook expressed concern that another shopping center was being brought forth where the pedestrian was not being put first. She did not believe the name “lifestyle center” should be used, but suggested that a new style of community shopping might be included.

Board Member Lynch believed the document should be clear.

In response to an inquiry by Board member Ezzy Ashcraft re the meaning of “competitively priced foods,” Board Member Lynch responded that competitively priced foods are created by competition, created by competition and more than one source of foods.

In response to a comment by Board member Ezzy Ashcraft regarding Section 2.5, Mr. Thomas replied that until 2004, there had been a concern that a great deal of sales tax had been leaked to neighboring communities. This affected the ability to fund services, and also affected the transportation situation as people drove off the island to go shopping. Board member Ezzy Ashcraft inquired whether that should be included in the document.

Board member McNamara suggested expanding 2.5(a) to read, “Services [space] to enable Alameda to realize its full retail sales potential by minimizing the amount of sales leakage to neighboring community.”

Mr. Thomas suggested providing explanatory text to state that this section addressed sales leakage. Board member Ezzy Ashcraft agreed.

Regarding 2.5(c), “discourage offices from ground floor occupancy,” Board member McNamara inquired whether mortgage companies and banks were retail uses. Mr. Thomas noted that the City did permit offices, provided they obtain a use permit. He added that real estates offices, etc., provided an interesting view from the sidewalk, and that they did not raise the concern raised by this policy.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft noted that she had been disappointed to see the Comerica Bank use go into the building with many beautiful windows, which would have invited a restaurant.

Vice President Kohlstrand noted that with respect to 2.5(e), “Maintain full-service community shopping centers serving all sectors of the City,” she suggested substituting the phrase “community service opportunities.” She noted that the community benefited from and enjoyed the uses within the districts.

Regarding 2.5(d), Board member Ezzy Ashcraft believed there should be a way to prevent Safeway from continuing to park the large trailer trucks in the parking lot where the cars are supposed to park. She understood that supermarket needed to receive large deliveries several times per day, but did not believe the trucks should take up eight parking spaces each, especially during the construction period.

Mr. Thomas suggested that that issue be addressed in the development plan approvals for Alameda Towne Centre, but not in this document.

Board member McNamara noted that regarding 2.5(k), she would like clarification of the relevance of the wording “to minimize automobile trips associated with the redevelopment of Alameda Point.”

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft noted that 2.5(g) read, “To encourage retention and addition of housing in the Main Street business districts...” and inquired how the policy would be followed.

Board Member Lynch liked the wording as it stood because it was clear and precise.

President Cook suggested removing the word “new” and replace “community shopping centers” with the updated language to be determined.

Mr. Thomas noted that this policy could be rewritten to say, “encourage retention and addition of housing in retail areas,” and strike the references to the different types of centers. He noted that the 1990 General Plan made a point of not saying “in community shopping centers,” and believed that reflected how community attitudes about mixed use development have changed in the last 15 years.

President Cook agreed, particularly in getting people out of their cars.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft noted that 2.5(j) read, “Support, encourage and foster new retail development to serve the west end of Alameda.” She noted that since the studies had been done in 2003, there had been a lot of growth in the number of residences, and inquired whether a survey had been done to hear from the residents of that area. She inquired what the need was for grocery uses in Bayport, and what other shopping needs they had.

Board member McNamara noted that she had been approached by several people, inquiring about what was happening in the West End. She inquired about the plan, and noted that it was not on the same levels as Park Street, and did not believe it was receiving the same City attention as Park Street. She questioned why (h) and (i) should be distinguished from each other.

Vice President Kohlstrand believed that Park Street was more of a downtown for Alameda, which was not to diminish Webster Street, which served more of a neighborhood base; Park Street drew more people from around the City.

Board Member Lynch noted that as he read 2.5(h), he was encouraged and enlightened, and valued the property in its current state, as well as what it could become.

Board Member Lynch noted that 2.5(i), he felt limited in his thought because of the wording, and suggested that 2.5(i) could be bolstered by the kind of language in 2.5(h) regarding vacated spaces.

President Cook suggested receiving input from WABA.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft noted that with respect to 2.5(s), “Amend Alameda Municipal Code to reduce off-street parking requirements,” she wrote “Yes!”

Vice President Kohlstrand agreed with Board member Ezzy Ashcraft’s comments.

Mr. Thomas noted that the use “consider amending” acknowledged that nothing could be amended until the public hearings were held on the specific amendment.

President Cook noted that the parking garage is close to opening, and she believed that the City should be able to give some relief to allow more restaurant uses downtown.

Board member McNamara inquired about the language “which exceeds recommendation of Metropolitan Transportation...” and whether the specifics of those recommendations was 5 per 1,000. Mr. Thomas replied that it was closer to 3 or 4 per 1,000. Board member McNamara inquired whether that should be included. Mr. Thomas replied that the explanatory text detailed the need and reason for it; staff would return with specific parking recommendations as part of the ongoing study. He noted that the General Plan policy stated that it was the City’s goal to reduce the parking requirements, and that the decision-marking of the reductions should be left to the actual Zoning Amendment, which will be brought back in the future.

Vice President Kohlstrand noted that the second sentence of the last item of page 4 should introduce the idea of shared parking, in addition to multimodal parking.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft noted that in 2.5(m), “Improve Public Transit Service to Shopping Areas,” the next sentence read, “Transit use can be encouraged by providing bus shelters...” She believed those were two different things, and that unless it referred to City transportation, the City did not have much influence over AC Transit funding decisions. She noted that AC Transit has been cutting services. She believed that a possible use of the increased parking meter fees on Park Street should go not only into the General Fund, but uses that support the shopping on Park and Webster Street such as a shopper shuttle.

Regarding 2.5(n)(v), Board member McNamara noted that the second sentence read, “If large quantities of off-street parking are necessary to serve the development should be provided in structures located behind or beside the retail mix,” which seemed to apply to Alameda Landing. She inquired whether in future design developments, what happened in Alameda Landing would not happen with respect to parking behind the use. Mr. Thomas noted that was his effort to verbalize the Board members’ wishes, and that it would not affect Alameda Landing. He noted that it would affect new construction and new retail facilities. He noted that the word “discourage” was used because Alameda Point was big, with a lot of land on the site, with large and difficult financial constraints. Staff wished to convey the intent that the City did not want large parking fields, which should be screened from view if they did exist.

Vice President Kohlstrand noted that when there was a lot of land with low density development, it was a fact of economics that there would not be a lot of structured parking. She noted that because of that tradeoff, some of the City's lofty goals may not be realized.

Mr. Thomas noted that it would not be wise to include policies that were not possible to achieve, but it would be desirable to include policies as goals to move toward.

President Cook noted that the proposed goal stated that if it cannot be achieved, it should be provided in structures located behind or beside the retail or mixed use buildings, and would like to further discourage "beside," which she believed interfered with the streetscape and pedestrian streetscape. She suggested the wording read, "...located behind, or if there is no alternative, beside the retail or mixed use building" to identify a hierarchy of preferences as a goal, rather than a prescriptive.

Board Member Lynch noted that University Village in Seattle was an outstanding shopping experience that had very small stores. He noted that the parking was woven through the development, with some parking beside or behind the stores, with walking paths and paths throughout. He noted that could not be possible if President Cook's wording was included.

Board member McNamara suggested the following change to the sentence she previously referenced: "discourage construction of new large parking areas *in order to* facilitate pedestrian, bicycle and other modes..."

Mr. Thomas noted that he would reword the entire policy.

Vice President Kohlstrand noted that 2.5(x) contained some key issues, and acknowledged Mr. Thomas' effort to distill the Board's concerns. She suggested specifically stating that there should be sidewalks on both sides of the streets, that the number of curb cuts should be limited, and that the existing block pattern in Alameda should be replicated. She suggested limiting the block length to 150 to 250 feet might be too small. She recalled that the Board had grappled with the public versus private streets, which was a financial issue as well as a design issue. She believed it was very important to keep streets in the public realm. She suggested limiting the number of curb cuts and parking area so the uses must provide all the circulation on-site. She wished to avoid using the blocks as a circulation aisle for the parking lot.

Board Member Lynch noted that Santana Row in San Jose has become a promenade, and that parking is no longer allowed on the street.

Mr. Thomas noted that there were two different kinds of streets: Park Street, which had a lot of through traffic and acted as a buffer for pedestrians; and Santana Row, which was more of a *cul de sac*. He cited the portion of Fifth Street north of Mitchell as a similar situation.

Vice President Kohlstrand suggested that on-street parking be provided unless there were certain small-scale pedestrian retail environments where it may not be appropriate.

Board Member Lynch cautioned against creating a policy that would constrain the creativity of a future use. Mr. Thomas believed that staff could fine-tune the language to acknowledge the different circumstances.

Vice President Kohlstrand suggested going up to 400 feet for the block lengths.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft noted that Santana Row had a lot of sidewalk dining, and that was not compatible with a lot of auto traffic.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft noted that with respect to 2.5(x)(d), “Street Trees and Landscaping,” she would like to insert wording from the Landscaping Guidelines. She would like to include a reference to new construction and design that is energy efficient.

President Cook noted that with respect to 2.5(y), the same language referring to parking being located behind or beside the building appeared, and suggested that the previous changes be applied to this section as well; she would like the new language about sidewalk dining and curb cuts to be included as well.

Board Member Lynch noted that Bay Street in Emeryville had changed; where cars could drive through near the Elephant Bar, that street had been blocked off to allow more pedestrian activity and sidewalk dining.

The public hearing was opened.

Ms. Karen Bey thanked staff for the document, and believed it was good City policy to have a clear vision on what the community desired in terms of retail. She noted that cities have been taking the lead in terms of development goals. She strongly believed that in the effort to encourage development, cities should be flexible but should also have written policy. She cited the Cities of Ojai and San Francisco as upholding new ordinances regulating new retail establishments.

The public hearing was closed for Board discussion.

No action was taken.

9-B. Approve a Change in the Format for a Future Public Forum Regarding the Housing Element and Measure A.

Mr. Thomas presented the staff report. Staff recommended that the Planning Board approve a change to the format which would allow staff to expand the time available for the panel discussions and eliminate the small group discussions.

Mr. Thomas noted that several letters had been received on this item.

The public hearing was opened.

Mr. Joseph Woodard submitted a speaker slip but was not longer in attendance to speak.

Ms. Diane Lichtenstein, Homes, noted that she had sent an email to the Board. She had thought the purpose of the forum was an evaluation by experts and professionals as to the impact of Measure A over the past 35 years. In reading the staff report, she believed that was what was intended, and believed this should be a very objective analysis. Homes supported the recommendation that there be no small groups at this time due to the informational and analytical nature of the forum. She did not believe there would be enough time to process the information at one time. She hoped this forum would not become a pro-and-con discussion of whether Measure A should exist. She believed there should be a discussion of the impact of Measure A on education under “Diversity of Housing/Housing Mix.”

The public hearing was closed for Board discussion.

President Cook inquired about the professional speakers that had committed to the forum.

Mr. Thomas noted that staff was working towards a February 2 meeting date, and that should be published in the next few days.

Board Member Lynch inquired why there were as many as six people to a panel, as he had seen in some workshops in the past.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft recalled that consultant David Early recommended that small breakout groups be used to maximize the opportunity for public participation, because not everyone feels comfortable speaking before a large group. She recalled that the SunCal Alameda Point workshop was a good example of that format working extremely well. She believed the forum should be held in a place where it could be televised.

Vice President Kohlstrand noted that she spoke with Cathy Woodbury the previous week, and understood that more time was needed for the forum. She had inquired about the confirmed panel members, and was noted that there was a reason for setting the deadline in the first place. She noted that this had been planned since Summer 2007, and the panels had not been confirmed. She was concerned that the Planning Director had not made more progress at this point. She would like the forum to be a good one, and was reluctant to extend the time, and believed it was unrealistic to confirm February 2 at this point. She was frustrated by the fact that it had taken so long to see so little progress.

Board member McNamara believed that the initial timeframe should be adhered to, and to move forward with it as best as they can. She suggested contacting alternative panelists. She believed the breakout sessions were secondary to the panel discussions, and emphasize that community education was the primary objective.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft inquired whether more time would provide a better opportunities for obtaining a better venue and more panelists.

Mr. Thomas noted that Board member McNamara's description was in line with the Planning Director's goals, which included retaining the original date. He noted that it was crucial for the panelists to be familiar with Measure A. He believed that a panel on land use could be pulled together to address land use.

President Cook would like to include a discussion of the connection between housing and transportation.

President Cook recalled a discussion during the summer during which Ms. Woodbury believed there would be some resources available for this forum and the panelists, as long as it was in the context of the Housing Element. She noted that these were busy people whose expertise would be in demand, and she believed it would be good to offer them at least a stipend. She was concerned that this forum had been placed on the back burner, and while she supported a February 2 date, she would rather have the forum be strong and well-organized.

Mr. Thomas replied that the other option was to pick an alternate date, and to request the full panel to be named for the January 28 Planning Board meeting; following that, the forum could be advertised.

Board Member Lynch tended to come down on the side of an organized and well-planned event, given the amount of energy and time. He believed that would yield a more positive event, and would like to give the organization process more time. He suggested thinking about the site in a more positive way as it related to people's experience from the event. He noted that two of the speakers had been keynote speakers at national conferences, and believed that it would best to offer the speakers at least a stipend. He would not object to delaying the forum if it was consistent with what the panel thinks it should produce.

Vice President Kohlstrand did not want another delay, which she found frustrating, and would like the Planning Director to speak to the Planning Board about this forum.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft believed it would be important to have a high-quality forum, given the amount of time it had taken to get to this point. By the January 28 meeting, she would like to know the moderator and four panelists for the first panel, as well as a facility. She would be comfortable with four speakers instead of six.

President Cook agreed with the level of frustration expressed by the Board members, particularly in being asked to make a decision without all the facts. She was ambivalent about the small groups, and noted that the public comment period could be moved to the next Planning Board meeting.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft noted that the breakout sessions were scheduled to be 45 minutes long, and that the open forum would be an hour and a half. She suggested incorporating the breakout groups into the public session, summarizing them, and then going into public comment. Her main concern was having solid, informed speakers and an adequate place to have the gathering.

In response to an inquiry by Board member Ezzy Ashcraft whether the forum would be televised, Mr. Thomas replied that it would be videotaped. He was unsure whether it could be televised live unless it was held in Council Chambers. He believed that taping the forum for later broadcast would be the best course.

Board member Ezzy Ashcraft moved to continue this item to the meeting of January 28, 2008, with the following conditions:

1. Staff will provide a list of between four to six panelists for each panel, and that each panel will include professionals from the various disciplines described in the proposed speaker list;
2. A date and a venue for the forum will have been determined, with sufficient time to publicly notice the meeting;
3. A decision will be made as to whether or not the breakout sessions will occur;
4. The Planning Director is requested to attend the meeting; and
5. The subject of speaker stipends will be addressed.

Mr. Thomas noted that because February 16 was a long weekend, that February 23 may be the best alternative date.

Vice President Kohlstrand seconded the motion, with the following voice vote – 5. Absent: 1 (Cunningham). The motion passed.

10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

Mr. Thomas noted that he had responded to a citizen email sent through the City website regarding Measure A.

President Cook noted that she had received a full packet about a national planning conference, and the League of California Cities conference in March 2008. She inquired about APA membership for the Planning Board members, which were available for \$60 per Planning Board member. She noted that membership in the California chapter was required, and was \$30 annually. She believed it was important for the Planning Board members to have access to this information.

Vice President Kohlstrand noted that she was already a member of APA.

Board Member Lynch noted that he was already a member of APA, and subscribed to the journals as well.

Mr. Thomas noted that he would check into the Board memberships.

11. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS:

- a. Oral Status Report regarding the Alameda Point Advisory Task Force (Board Members Cook/Kohlstrand)

Mr. Thomas noted that he would insert the PowerPoint presentation in the packet at the next meeting, and that the next meeting would be held January 30, 2008.

President Cook noted that it was a well-attended session, and that the general issues for the community were identified.

- b. Oral Status Report regarding the Oakland/Chinatown Advisory Committee (Board Member Mariani).

Mr. Thomas noted that there was not been a recent meeting, and added that Board member McNamara was the alternative Planning Board member; Ms. Mariani had resigned.

- c. Oral Status Report regarding the Transportation subcommittee (Vice President Kohlstrand).

Vice President Kohlstrand noted that there had been no meetings since the last report.

- d. Oral Status Report regarding the Alameda Climate Protection Task Force (Board Member Cunningham).

Board member Cunningham was not in attendance to present the report.

Mr. Thomas reported that the Task Force approved the plan with some relatively minor amendments, and that it would go to the City Council on February 5, 2008, for final report. The Task Force also recommended that the City Council establish a standing commission to address these issues.

In response to an inquiry by Vice President Kohlstrand whether a green building ordinance would follow, Mr. Thomas believed that was a strong possibility.

12. ADJOURNMENT: 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Thomas, Secretary
City Planning Board

These minutes were approved at the January 28, 2008, Planning Board meeting. This meeting was audio and video taped.